



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3010798

Address: 2010 South Jackson Street

Applicant: Michelle Wang, Runberg Architects for Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) Development

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 20, 2010

Board Members Present: Sharon Sutton (Chair)
Evan Bourquard
Clint Keithly
Lisa Picard
Wolf Saar

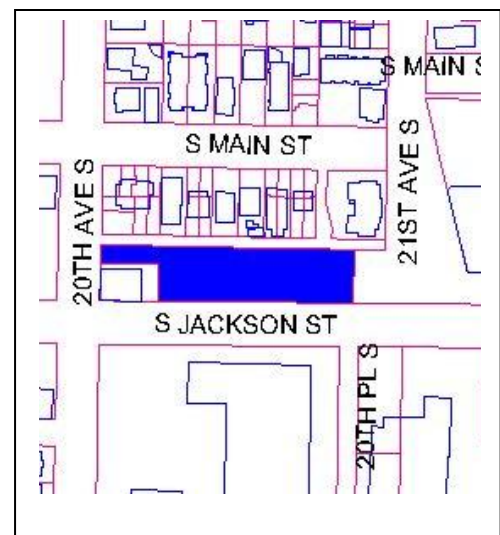
Board Members Absent: Dawn Bushnaq, Recused

DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: C1-65 and 23rd & Union-Jackson
Residential Urban Village Overlay

Nearby Zones: (North) Lowrise 3
(South) C1-65
(East) C1-65
(West) C1-65



Lot Area:	The 14,498 sq. ft. site is an irregularly shaped lot that fronts approximately 300' feet along S Jackson with a "panhandle" shape that fronts approximately 28 feet along 20th Ave S.
Current Development:	Vacant
Access:	Alley to the north and South Jackson Street to the south.
	The site is located in the Central Area neighborhood at the intersection of 20th Ave S and S Jackson Street. The site occupies the northeast corner of the intersection of 20th and Jackson. There is an alleyway servicing the site along the north edge, as well as a vacated ROW to the east of the site called the Yesler-Atlantic pedestrian walkway which continues north to S Washington Street.
Surrounding Development:	The site descends gently approximately 18-20 feet from west to east. There are no existing structures on the site. A small restaurant occupies an adjacent property at the southwest corner.
	The area is zoned a mixture of C1-65', L-3 directly to the north and across the alley, NC3-40' kitty-corner to the project block, and NC3-65' across the street and to the southeast. Reflecting the diversity of activity of use near this site, other nearby zoning designations are: LDT, L-1, 2, and 3, NC1-40'. The site is served by public transportation (Metro 14 bus route) along S Jackson Street. Existing crosswalks help negotiate the traffic flow of Jackson and allow greater mobility through the neighborhood.
ECAs:	None
Neighborhood Character:	This site is oriented primarily toward a moderately busy portion of S Jackson Street. The surrounding area is composed of highly mixed uses, such as the Franz bakery and Washington Middle School across the street, the Seattle Vocational Institute to the east as well as retail spilling up from the International District. Between the project site and the Seattle Vocational School to the east, there is a path that leads up to a small park, and then continues to S Washington Street. Nearby is also Judkins Park, Edwin T Pratt Park, the Pratt Fine Arts Center, the Douglas Truth branch of the Seattle Public Library, and the Caroline Downs Family Medical Center. There is a small retail core approximately 600 feet to the east at 23rd and Jackson.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a five story low income senior housing building with approximately 60 units. Parking for 11 vehicles to be provided within the structure, at grade and accessed from the alley.

On the east half of the lot, there will be a future LIHI development for approximately 50 units of workforce housing for families.

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DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include at grade parking shown within the structure in the panhandle portion of the site, common amenity spaces at the ground level and open space between the building and the sidewalk and to the north of the proposed structure.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a simple rectangular five-story volume which is pushed up against S Jackson St. in order to open up as much space toward the alley in back as possible.

The second scheme (Option B) showed a six-story structure that stepped down to 4 stories along the alley. The entire massing is set back from S Jackson St to provide relief from the public right of way.

The third and preferred scheme (Option C) showed a courtyard space between the proposed building and a future LIHI development site adjacent to the property. This scheme has greater modulation along Jackson than the other two options.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately ten members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting and one comment letter was submitted. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Stated that the townhouses that are directly across the alley from the subject site are oriented toward the alley as their front yards. These units have concerns about light and shadow impacts, increased traffic, noise from the transformer and trash collection from the proposed building. They are also concerned with the proposed setback reduction along the alley side of the proposed building.
- Objected to having direct connections between the site and the alley and the future use should be contained.

- Feels street parking should be improved and better enforced. Concerned that the portion of the building located in the panhandle will block the entrance to the building located at the corner. This corner site would like to retain its future ability to redevelop.
- Concerned with venting location and noise generators.
- Want to know what street level enhancement will be provided.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

A. Site Planning

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board recognized that the site has an unusual shape with the panhandle portion and unusual topography that slopes significantly downward from west to east. These conditions coupled with the long frontage and proposed program pose a challenge to creating a site and use that engages and activates the street and alley.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed at length the design and configuration of the landscaped and hardscaped areas between the building façade and the sidewalk and the alley and townhouses to the north of the building. These open spaces involve a series of retaining walls, fences, planters, patios and vegetation. The Board would like to see more detail of the design of these walls and fences. All of these features should endeavor to interact with the sidewalk and pedestrians. Both visual and experiential access to these open spaces is critical, especially given the lack of commercial uses at the ground level.

- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that activation of both the street and alley facades are important given the orientation of the neighbors to the north towards the alley as their front yards and the position of the development on an important commercial arterial. The Board emphasized that the communal space provided at the ground floor should truly interact visually and physically with the sidewalk and pedestrian environment.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of the design of the alley elevation. The Board supported the suggestion that the alley design be a softer environment and not simply a typical back of house appearance. The alley elevation and site plan should create opportunities for open space and shift the building toward the street front to allow more light and air between buildings. Generous landscaping and activation of the north side of the site are important and can be achieved with programming of the interior common space extending through the first floor to the alley façade. See also A-7.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

See A-7 below.

A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that a visual connection through the site to the alley is critical and the design should strive to achieve porosity among the sidewalk, the ground level open spaces, the interior and where possible, through to the alley. The Board felt that the location of the courtyard in general could be more effective in a different location where there are less grade challenges and visual barriers. If the courtyard is not relocated from its current location, the proposed courtyard space to the east should engage with the interior uses on the west façade ie, relocating the stair tower and avoiding a blank wall on this elevation.

A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts. Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.

See D-2.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.** Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board acknowledged the zone change across the alley from the subject site to a Lowrise zone. The Board appreciated that a lower height was shown in the preferred option (five stories) and agreed that this would be a more sensitive response to the neighborhood context and existing development.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that the concept of the dynamic façade was promising and would like to see it further developed. The Board supported the idea of a simple skin and a clean façade without a lot of extraneous “stuff” hanging off of it. The Board also expressed interest in materials used in a “natural” manner.

- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was supportive of the siding concept that reinforced the dynamic façade design concept.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the proposed blank wall along 20th Ave South and agreed that a blank wall at this location is not an acceptable design solution. The Board suggested there might be an opportunity for the residential amenity space to be located in the panhandle portion of the building. The Board

acknowledged that this is a somewhat unfortunate configuration of the property that creates this unusual condition. The Board felt that the frontage on 20th Avenue should be more activated. For these reasons, the Board was disinclined towards a departure that would allow a blank wall at this location. The Board suggested exploring other locations for the parking.

- D-3 Retaining Walls.** Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.

See A-2.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures.** The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed that the parking configuration in the panhandle portion of the site created a potentially undesirable condition on the 20th Street frontage with a blank wall that needs to be further explored. The Board noted that the single story garage structure, as proposed, will be very visible to the neighbors across the alley to the north and as such, should be well designed.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that all of the service elements should be contained in the structure and screened from view by the neighbors across the alley.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that safety and security along the alley and street front are critical and should be addressed with lighting, clear views across the site and views to and from the interior spaces.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

See A-5, D-5, D-7 and E-3.

D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board recommended that the ground level design include significant glazing and transparency to further reinforce views to and from the site and interaction between the interior uses (common areas) with the open spaces and pedestrian activity.

E. Landscaping

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the landscape design includes a setback area between the sidewalk and the building face, as well as a courtyard area to the east of the proposed building. This intervening open space would include a series of stepped landscaped and hardscaped areas and delineated with an ornamental fence. The Board stated concerns with the separation of this space from the pedestrian environment and wanted to see more visual and experiential interconnectivity among the ground level uses, the open spaces and the sidewalk. The landscape design also included a setback and vegetation along the alley façade. The Board would like to see this concept further developed and enhanced.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1. Residential Uses at Street Level (SMC 23.47A.008.D.2):** The Code requires that residential uses located at street level are limited to 20%. The applicant proposes to have 100% residential uses located at street level.

The Board indicated concern with the proposed departure because the proposed open space design may create a less interactive streetscape than would otherwise be achieved with a commercial use at ground level. The Board would like to see the area between the building and sidewalk engage the pedestrian and provide visual access to activity within the building and in these open spaces. In order to grant such a departure, the Board would like to see the grade changes minimized to encourage views to and through the site and ground level uses, transparency, limited barriers and visual access to the site. The applicant must make a persuasive case that the street will be properly activated and monitored in order for such a departure to be granted.

2. **Residential Amenity Space (SMC 23.47A.024.A):** The Code requires that 5% of the gross building area in residential use be set aside for residential amenity space. The applicant proposes to provide 4.5%. The project will provide additional greenery on the alley that does not meet the minimum dimension of 10 ft. If this additional landscape area were included in the totals, no departure would be required. Over 4500 sf of interior amenity area is also provided on this project.

The Board indicated that the full amount of residential amenity space be provided because no apparent improvements to the design would result from this departure.

3. **Transparency (SMC 23.47A.008.B2):** The Code requires that sixty percent of the street-facing facade between 2 feet and 8 feet above the sidewalk shall be transparent. The applicant proposes to allow blank wall 20 ft long with screening in front of it for parking uses along 20th Ave South.

The Board did not favor the proposed departure to create blank walls along 20th Avenue South. The Board would like to see an intervening use or another parking configuration explored.

4. **Alley Setback (SMC 23.47A.014.B):** The Code requires that for each portion of a structure above 40 feet in height, additional setback at the rate of two feet of setback for every ten feet by which the height of such portion exceeds 40 feet. The applicant proposes an encroachment into this setback at the uppermost corner of the building's top floor.

The Board indicated its inclination to disapprove the proposed departure because maximizing light to the alley and the neighbors to the north is critical given that the neighboring units front onto the alley.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

